CLAIMS

Therefore, having thus described the invention, at least the following is claimed:

1. A method for providing television functionality comprising:

defining a time period;

associating a user preference with the time period;

providing a first result in accordance with the user preference if a request for television functionality is received during the defined time period; and

providing a second result if the request for the television functionality is received outside the defined time period.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on user input.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is determined based on viewing parameters associated with services that are provided to a user.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the viewing parameters associated with services correspond to interactive program guide (IPG) information.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the IPG information is stored in a memory contained in a digital home communication terminal (DHCT).

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the IPG information is received by the DHCT via a cable television network.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is determined based on a duration that a service characterized by a viewing parameter is presented to a user.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is determined based on a frequency that a service characterized by a viewing parameter is presented to a user.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is determined based on a duration and a frequency that a service characterized by a viewing parameter is presented to a user.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference varies over time.

11. The method of claim 1, where a functionality of a remote control key is disabled during the time period.

12. The method of claim 1, where a functionality of a remote control key is altered during the time period.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the television functionality is disabled during the time period.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the television functionality is altered during the time period.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the television functionality is limited during the time period.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period has an indefinite duration.

17. The method of claim 1, where multiple time periods are defined for providing a result in accordance with the user preference.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is for a service.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference conflicts with another user preference.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on a time of day.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on a day of a week.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on a plurality of days of the week.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on a month of a year.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on a date.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on a holiday.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein the time period is defined based on a time of day and a day of a week.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is defined by a user.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is determined based on tracking services that are provided by a digital home communication terminal.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein the first result is only provided if a preference-adaptive mode is activated.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the preference adaptive mode is activated via a switch located on a remote control device.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein the television functionality comprises a purchase of a television service.

32. The method of claim 1, wherein the television functionality comprises limiting a scope of information provided by an interactive program guide (IPG).

33. The method of claim 1, wherein the television functionality comprises a recording of a television service.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the request for the television functionality is provided by activating a record key on a remote control device while a service in an interactive program guide is highlighted.

35. The method of claim 33, wherein the first result comprises the recording of a television service.

36. The method of claim 33, wherein the second result does not comprise recording of a television service.

37. The method of claim 1, wherein the television functionality comprises implementing a sales transaction.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the first result comprises an implementation of the sales transaction.

39. The method of claim 37, wherein the second result does not comprise an implementation of the sales transaction.

40. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference and the time period are determined based on user input.

41. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference is determined based on user input.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein the user input indicates a preference for a viewing parameter.

43. The method of claim 41, wherein the user input indicates a preference against a viewing parameter.

44. The method of claim 41, wherein the user input indicates a preference for a first viewing parameter and a preference against a second viewing parameter.

45. The method of claim 1, where a preference database is used to keep track of the user preference.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the preference tracking database keeps track of user preferences for a plurality of types of viewing parameters.

47. The method of claim 45, wherein the preference tracking database keeps track of user preferences in relation to a plurality of time periods.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein the plurality of time periods comprise a recurring schedule.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein the recurring schedule comprises daily time periods.

50. The method of claim 48, wherein the recurring schedule comprises weekly time periods.

51. The method of claim 48, wherein the recurring schedule comprises monthly time periods.

52. The method of claim 48, wherein the recurring schedule comprises time periods corresponding to weekdays and weekend days.

53. The method of claim 48, wherein the recurring schedule comprises time periods corresponding to weekdays and weekend days, and holidays.

54. The method of claim 45, wherein the user preference is tracked by assigning a score to a viewing parameter.

55. The method of claim 54, wherein the score for a viewing parameter may be based on a weighted linear combination of scores associated with the viewing parameter.

56. The method of claim 54, wherein the score for a plurality of viewing parameters may be based on a weighted linear combination of scores associated with the plurality of viewing parameter.

57. The method of claim 54, wherein the score for a viewing parameter changes over time.

58. The method of claim 54, wherein the score for a viewing parameter is revised using statistical analysis.

59. The method of claim 54, wherein the score for a viewing parameter is determined using an artificial intelligence technology.

60. The method of claim 1, where data identifying the user preference is stored in non-volatile memory.

61. The method of claim 60, where data identifying the user preference is stored in volatile memory and in non-volatile memory.

62. The method of claim 61, wherein the non-volatile memory is located at a headend.

63. The method of claim 1, where data identifying the user preference is stored within a digital home communication terminal.

64. The method of claim 1, where data identifying the user preference is stored within a headend device.

65. The method of claim 1, wherein the user preference corresponds to at least one viewing parameter.

66. The method of claim 65, wherein the viewing parameter is a television service.

67. The method of claim 65, wherein the viewing parameter is a type of television service.

68. The method of claim 65, wherein the viewing parameter is a television instance.

69. The method of claim 65, wherein the television instance is a television program.

70. The method of claim 65, wherein the viewing parameter is a type of television instance.

71. The method of claim 65, where a look-up table is used to determine the user preference for a viewing parameter.

72. The method of claim 65, where a look-up table is used to specify a restriction on information to be provided to a user during the time period.

73. The method of claim 65, where a look-up table is used to specify a restriction on information to be provided to an application during the time period.

74. The method of claim 65, where a look-up table is used to specify a restriction on a functionality of an application during the time period.

75. The method of claim 65, where a look-up table is used to determine whether an application is enabled during a time period.

76. The method of claim 65, where a look-up table is used to determine a user preference for a plurality of viewing parameters.

77. The method of claim 76, where a number of viewing parameters represented in a first look-up table entry is independent from a number of viewing parameters represented in a second look-up table entry.

78. The method of claim 65, where a plurality of look-up tables are used to determine a user preference for a plurality of viewing parameters.

79. The method of claim 65, wherein the television functionality comprises a presentation of an interactive program guide (IPG).

80. The method of claim 79, where information provided by the IPG is stored in memory in a digital home communication terminal (DHCT).

81. The method of claim 80, wherein the information provided by the IPG is received by the DHCT via a cable television network.

82. The method of claim 79, wherein the first result comprises an IPG that does not provide information corresponding to a time slot that is not in accordance with the user preference.

83. The method of claim 79, wherein the second result comprises an IPG that provides information corresponding to the time slot that is not in accordance with the user preference.

84. The method of claim 79, wherein the first result comprises an IPG that does not provide information corresponding to a television service that is blocked during the time period.

85. The method of claim 79, wherein the second result comprises an IPG that provides information corresponding to a television service that is blocked during the time period.

86. The method of claim 79, wherein the first result comprises an IPG that is configured in accordance with the user preference.

87. The method of claim 79, wherein the first result comprises a presentation of an initial IPG screen that lists at least one television service that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

88. The method of claim 87, wherein the initial IPG screen lists a plurality of television services that correspond to the viewing parameter.

89. The method of claim 87, wherein the initial IPG screen does not list any television services that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

90. The method of claim 87, wherein the second result comprises an initial IPG screen that lists at least one television service that does not correspond to the viewing parameter.

91. The method of claim 90, wherein the initial IPG screen lists a plurality of television services that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

92. The method of claim 90, wherein the initial IPG screen does not list a television service that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

93. The method of claim 65, wherein the television functionality comprises tuning to a television service.

94. The method of claim 93, wherein the first result comprises tuning to a television service that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

95. The method of claim 94, wherein the second result comprises tuning to a television service that does not correspond to the viewing parameter.

96. The method of claim 65, wherein the television functionality comprises tuning to a user identified television service.

97. The method of claim 96, wherein the user identified television service corresponds to the viewing parameter.

98. The method of claim 97, wherein the first result comprises not tuning to the user identified television service.

99. The method of claim 98, wherein the first result comprises prompting a user to provide additional input.

100. The method of claim 99, wherein the additional input is a personal identification number (PIN).

101. The method of claim 98, wherein the second result comprises tuning to the user identified television service.

102. The method of claim 65, wherein the television functionality comprises a presentation of a list of video recordings.

103. The method of claim 102, wherein the first result comprises a presentation of an initial list of video recordings that lists at least one video recording that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

104. The method of claim 103, wherein the initial list of video recordings lists a plurality of video recordings that correspond to the viewing parameter.

105. The method of claim 103, wherein the initial list of video recordings does not list any video recordings that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

106. The method of claim 103, wherein the second result comprises an initial list of video recordings that lists at least one video recording that does not correspond to the viewing parameter.

107. The method of claim 106, wherein the initial list of video recordings lists a plurality of video recordings that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

108. The method of claim 106, wherein the initial list of video recordings does not list a video recording that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

109. A method for providing a television service comprising:

defining a time period;

associating a user preference with the time period; and

providing during the time period a television service in accordance with the user preference.

110. The method of claim 109, wherein the television service is not provided in response to user input requesting the television service.

111. The method of claim 110, wherein the television service is a television channel.

112. A system for providing television functionality comprising:

logic configured to associate a user preference with a defined time period; and

logic configured to provide a first result in accordance with the user preference if a request for television functionality is received during the defined time

period, and to provide a second result if the request for television functionality is received outside the defined time period.

113. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on user input.

114. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference is determined based on viewing parameters associated with services that are provided to a user.

115. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference is determined based on a duration that a service characterized by a viewing parameter is presented to a user.

116. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference is determined based on a frequency that a service characterized by a viewing parameter is presented to a user.

117. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference is determined based on a duration and a frequency that a service characterized by a viewing parameter is presented to a user.

118. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference varies over time.

119. The system of claim 112, where a functionality of a remote control key is disabled during the time period.

120. The system of claim 112, where a functionality of a remote control key is altered during the time period.

121. The system of claim 112, wherein the television functionality is disabled during the time period.

122. The system of claim 112, wherein the television functionality is altered during the time period.

123. The system of claim 112, wherein the television functionality is limited during the time period.

124. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period has an indefinite duration.

125. The system of claim 112, where multiple time periods are defined for providing a result in accordance with the user preference.

126. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference is for a service.

127. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference conflicts with another user preference.

128. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on a time of day.

129. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on a day of a week.

130. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on a plurality of days of the week.

131. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on a month of a year.

132. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on a date.

133. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on a holiday.

134. The system of claim 112, wherein the time period is defined based on a time of day and a day of a week.

135. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference is defined by a user.

136. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference is determined based on tracking services that are provided by a digital home communication terminal.

137. The system of claim 112, wherein the first result is only provided if a preference-adaptive mode is activated.

138. The system of claim 137, wherein the preference adaptive mode is activated via a switch located on a remote control device.

139. The system of claim 112, wherein the television functionality comprises a recording of a television service.

140. The system of claim 139, wherein the request for the television functionality is provided by activating a record key on a remote control device while a service in an interactive program guide is highlighted.

141. The system of claim 139, wherein the first result comprises the recording of a television service.

142. The system of claim 139, wherein the second result does not comprise recording of a television service.

143. The system of claim 112, wherein the television functionality comprises implementing a sales transaction.

144. The system of claim 143, wherein the first result comprises an implementation of the sales transaction.

145. The system of claim 143, wherein the second result does not comprise an implementation of the sales transaction.

146. The system of claim 112, where user preference is determined based on user input.

147. The system of claim 146, wherein the user input indicates a preference for a viewing parameter.

148. The system of claim 146, wherein the user input indicates a preference against a viewing parameter.

149. The system of claim 146, wherein the user input indicates a preference for a first viewing parameter and a preference against a second viewing parameter.

150. The system of claim 112, where a preference tracking database is used to keep track of the user preference.

151. The system of claim 150, wherein the preference tracking database keeps track of user preferences for a plurality of types of viewing parameters.

152. The system of claim 150, wherein the preference tracking database keeps track of user preferences in relation to a plurality of time periods.

153. The system of claim 150, wherein the user preference is tracked by assigning a score to a viewing parameter.

154. The system of claim 153, wherein the score for a viewing parameter may be based on a weighted linear combination of scores associated with the viewing parameter.

155. The system of claim 153, wherein the score for a plurality of viewing parameters may be based on a weighted linear combination of scores associated with the plurality of viewing parameter.

156. The system of claim 153, wherein the score for a viewing parameter changes over time.

157. The system of claim 153, wherein the score for a viewing parameter is revised using statistical analysis.

158. The system of claim 153, wherein the score for a viewing parameter is determined using an artificial intelligence technology.

159. The system of claim 112, where data identifying the user preference is stored in non-volatile memory.

160. The system of claim 112, where data identifying the user preference is stored within a digital home communication terminal.

161. The system of claim 112, where data identifying the user preference is stored within a headend device.

162. The system of claim 112, wherein the user preference corresponds to at least one viewing parameter.

163. The system of claim 162, wherein the viewing parameter is a television service.

164. The system of claim 162, wherein the viewing parameter is a type of television service.

165. The system of claim 162, wherein the viewing parameter is a television instance.

166. The system of claim 162, wherein the television instance is a television program.

167. The system of claim 162, wherein the viewing parameter is a type of television instance.

168. The system of claim 162, where a look-up table is used to determine the user preference for a viewing parameter.

169. The system of claim 162, where a look-up table is used to specify a restriction on information to be provided to a user during the time period.

170. The system of claim 162, where a look-up table is used to specify a restriction on information to be provided to an application during the time period.

171. The system of claim 162, where a look-up table is used to specify a restriction on a functionality of an application during the time period.

172. The system of claim 162, where a look-up table is used to determine whether an application is enabled during a time period.

173. The system of claim 162, where a look-up table is used to determine a user preference for a plurality of viewing parameters.

174. The system of claim 173, where a number of viewing parameters represented in a first look-up table entry is independent from a number of viewing parameters represented in a second look-up table entry.

175. The system of claim 162, where a plurality of look-up tables are used to determine a user preference for a plurality of viewing parameters.

176. The system of claim 162, wherein the television functionality comprises a presentation of an interactive program guide (IPG).

177. The system of claim 191, wherein the first result comprises an IPG that does not provide information corresponding to a time slot that is not in accordance with the user preference.

178. The system of claim 191, wherein the second result comprises an IPG that provides information corresponding to the time slot that is not in accordance with the user preference.

179. The system of claim 191, wherein the first result comprises an IPG that does not provide information corresponding to a television service that is blocked during the time period.

180. The system of claim 191, wherein the second result comprises an IPG that provides information corresponding to a television service that is blocked during the time period.

181. The system of claim 191, wherein the first result comprises an IPG that is configured in accordance with the user preference.

182. The system of claim 191, wherein the first result comprises a presentation of an initial IPG screen that lists at least one television service that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

183. The system of claim 192, wherein the initial IPG screen lists a plurality of television services that correspond to the viewing parameter.

184. The system of claim 192, wherein the initial IPG screen does not list any television services that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

185. The system of claim 192, wherein the second result comprises an initial IPG screen that lists at least one television service that does not correspond to the viewing parameter.

186. The system of claim 185, wherein the initial IPG screen lists a plurality of television services that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

187. The system of claim 185, wherein the initial IPG screen does not list a television service that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

188. The system of claim 162, wherein the television functionality comprises tuning to a television service.

189. The system of claim 188, wherein the first result comprises tuning to a television service that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

190. The system of claim 189, wherein the second result comprises tuning to a television service that does not correspond to the viewing parameter.

191. The system of claim 162, wherein the television functionality comprises tuning to a user identified television service.

192. The system of claim 191, wherein the user identified television service corresponds to the viewing parameter.

193. The system of claim 192, wherein the first result comprises not tuning to the user identified television service.

194. The system of claim 193, wherein the first result comprises prompting a user to provide additional input.

195. The system of claim 194, wherein the additional input is a personal identification number (PIN).

196. The system of claim 193, wherein the second result comprises tuning to the user identified television service.

197. The system of claim 162, wherein the television functionality comprises a presentation of a list of video recordings.

198. The system of claim 197, wherein the first result comprises a presentation of an initial list of video recordings that lists at least one video recording that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

199. The system of claim 198, wherein the initial list of video recordings lists a plurality of video recordings that correspond to the viewing parameter.

200. The system of claim 198, wherein the initial list of video recordings does not list any video recordings that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

201. The system of claim 198, wherein the second result comprises an initial list of video recordings that lists at least one video recording that does not correspond to the viewing parameter.

202. The system of claim 201, wherein the initial list of video recordings lists a plurality of video recordings that do not correspond to the viewing parameter.

203. The system of claim 201, wherein the initial list of video recordings does not list a video recording that corresponds to the viewing parameter.

204. A method for providing television functionality comprising:

tracking a user preference over time;

receiving a user request for television functionality; and

providing a visual result that is responsive to the user request and to a user preference associated with a current time period.

205. The method of claim 204, wherein the television functionality comprises providing an interactive program guide.

206. The method of claim 204, wherein the television functionality comprises tuning to a television service.

207. A method for providing an interactive program guide (IPG) comprising:

defining a time period;

associating a user preference with the time period;

providing an initial IPG screen that lists a television service that is in accordance with the user preference if a request for an IPG is received during the defined time period; and

providing an initial IPG screen that does not list a television service that is in accordance with the user preference if the request for the IPG is received outside the defined time period.

208. A method for providing television functionality comprising:

defining a time period;

associating a user preference with the time period;

providing a first result in accordance with the user preference if a request for television functionality is received during the defined time period; and

providing a second result if the request for the television functionality is received outside the defined time period;

where the user preference is determined based on a duration that a service characterized by a viewing parameter is presented to a user;

where the user preference varies over time;

where multiple time periods are defined for providing a result in accordance with the user preference;

where the user preference is determined by tracking services that are provided by a digital home communication terminal; and

where the first result is only provided if a preference-adaptive mode is activated.